

UNITED STATES SENATOR • IOWA

CHUCK GRASSLEY

<http://grassley.senate.gov>
press@grassley.senate.gov

Contact: Jill Kozeny, 202/224-1308
Jill Gerber, 202/224-6522

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, June 26, 2001

Grassley Seeks New Markets for Iowa Exports

Iowa Senator Builds Support for Tools to Help President Negotiate Trade Agreements

WASHINGTON — Sen. Chuck Grassley continued building support for trade promotion authority by hosting an event on Capitol Hill today with the Secretary of Agriculture, a bipartisan group of congressional leaders, and representatives from national farm organizations.

“The best way for the United States to secure its position at the next round of global trade talks scheduled for November is to grant the President trade promotion authority,” Grassley said. “Without this green light from Congress, the United States will be idling indefinitely. It’s time to give the President the tools he needs to negotiate trade agreements that open new markets for American agriculture.”

Grassley made the case for trade promotion authority in front of one of the American-made products that are ripe for greater export, a John Deere tractor made in Waterloo, Iowa, and set alongside the U.S. Capitol today. Grassley said with lower tariffs and greater access to foreign markets, more of these tractors could be sold around the world, creating jobs at home that pay more than the average.

Along with Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, senators and representatives from farm states urged Congressional action on trade promotion authority. Glenn Keppy, of Scott County, Iowa, presented a letter from the National Pork Producers Council urging action on legislation this year.

The U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power to broker matters of international trade. But with 535 members, it is virtually impossible to hammer out an agreement that would satisfy each and every member down to the last detail. Trade promotion authority retains Congress’ right to accept or reject trade agreements without making changes to the proposal. Since 1994, when the policy then known as fast-track trading authority expired, the clock has been ticking on this issue.

“The United States stands at a crossroads. Do we want to spring forward and compete for new market opportunities? Or do we fall backward and lag behind our trading partners?” Grassley said. A strong advocate for free and fair trade, Grassley said he wants to see “the U.S. restore its position as a leader in matters of international trade. Without trade promotion authority, we take a backseat while other countries forge ahead with strategic trade pacts that leave American farmers, workers, entrepreneurs, and small business owners at a competitive disadvantage,” he said.

U.S. exports support more than 12 million American jobs. More than one-third of U.S. agriculture production was exported in 1998, at a value of over \$52 billion. The U.S. leads the world in trade in services with over \$264 billion in exports annually.

In Iowa, exports provide more than 86,000 jobs. Iowa exports a wide range of products to 154 countries and ranks second in the nation for agricultural exports. One-third of an Iowa farmer's income comes from exports sales.

“Expanding commercial ties with the world community helps keep the U.S. economy growing. That means increased farm income and bigger paychecks and better job opportunities for American workers,” Grassley said. “Stronger commercial ties also spread both prosperity and peace to nations around the world who are less fortunate than ours.”

Grassley began his campaign for trade promotion authority last week, when he and other agricultural leaders joined President Bush at a White House event to rally for Congressional action. Grassley also participated in two days of Senate Finance Committee hearings on the significance of trade promotion authority. On Thursday, the committee considered the nomination of Allen F. Johnson to be the special agricultural negotiator for the office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Johnson is originally from Long Grove, Iowa.

Grassley serves as Ranking Member of the Finance Committee, which is responsible for international trade legislation.